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ABSTRACT

The institutional goals, students, programs and services, personnel and organization, instruction, facilities and finances, and community relations of the community college as they relate to the community college reading center are discussed. (Not available in hard copy because of marginal legibility of original document.) (DB)

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THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE READING CENTER

BY CAROLE G. HANKIN

JC 730 252

"We must open the door of opportunity. We must equip our people to walk through these doors."

--Lyndon Baines Johnson,
December 10, 1968

"There were individuals in the remedial program who improved their scholastic standing and were salvaged academically... However, the overall group measures tend to override the significance of these individual cases when mean scores are considered."

-- John Losak, (385)
January, 1972

"It seems reasonable to conclude that the experimental project was successful, both in terms of GPA and reduced attrition rate. Further, it would appear that a developmental reading program can assist students with limited verbal abilities to progress toward more effective and efficient reading skills."

--R.N.Sawyer and L.W.Martin, (55)
Summer, 1969

Introduction

> "It seems that the objectives of a good developmental-remedial college reading program are ideally suited to those of a junior community college. Both want to aid the individual, whatever his ability, to realize his highest potential. Both are interested in preparing the undergraduate for successful advanced work in a four-year institution and to 'save souls' from dropping out of college. The junior community college serves the local community, just as a reading program is built around the needs of the community." (Freer, 87)

The Community or Junior College is a relatively recent phenomenon. Born in the Twentieth Century, it had its maturation in the 1960's, when vast numbers of students began to come to its doors. Enrollments increased as follows (AACJC, 7):

1950 -	439,332
1960 -	660,216
1970 -	2,450,451
1972 -	2,886,062

With these numbers came many students who had less preparation for college study than those that preceded them, and as Ferrin has observed:

> "...the influx of large numbers of disadvantaged students into higher education, and particularly into community colleges, in recent years has strained institutional academic operations." (Ferrin,3)

However, the colleges have risen to the challenge, have designed reading and other programs to meet the needs of these students so that they might succeed in their academic studies. All this done under a flood of criticism, but assumed dutifully nonetheless, as Gleazer indicates:

> "Often there is more than a hint of disparagement. But it is a legitimate--even more, an essential--task of the community college to deal with inadequacies in the student's educational background.
> ...'remediation' is an inescapable obligation in an institution which has an open-door admissions policy..."
> (Gleazer,1968,58)

A few words on terminology and definitions: the literature and even practitioners in the field are not using words precisely or consistently. For instance they often use the terms remedial, developmental, basic studies, general studies, compensatory education, "a program for students with educational deficiencies," salvage, and repair quite interchangeably. Similarly, students in these programs are referred to as high risk, academically unsuccessful, culturally disadvantaged, marginal, disabled, educationally disadvantaged, and underprepared. In this article we shall accept Ferrin's definitions:

> "Remedial courses - Preparatory courses taken within the departmental structure.
> Academic skill services - Provisions for students to receive one or more educational services as they have need. These services may or may not be grouped into one particular campus center.
> Developmental programs - Specially organized programs that include a range of educational services for students formally enrolled in those programs." (Ferrin,6)

When it comes to reading, if the word remedial is used it will refer to instruction which attempts to remedy a condition which can be improved for students more that one year below grade level, whereas developmental instruction will refer to programs for students reading at grade level or no more than one grade level below it. We also should keep in mind Medsker's admonition that:

> "It is the program for students who enter with deficiencies that is important and not the term that describes it." (Medsker, 66)

The comparison in volume of available literature for college and adult reading in contrast to that available for the K-12 program is astounding. The Education Index, card catalogs, even the references to "reading" in textbooks and books on colleges in libraries show much less attention to the field of higher education. Yet, there is much in the K-12 literature which is analogous and usable. After completing the research for this brief paper, the present writer must agree with Earle that:

> "...differences among educational levels in the principles and practices of effective reading instruction remain a matter of degree, not kind. In other words, the reports recommended here have a definite message for the teacher of reading at most any level, certainly from middle school on." (Earle, 383)

College reading is a fertile field for research, a fact borne out by personal contact with reading centers as well.

Finally, for purposes of this introduction, a brief observation: There seems to have been little progress made in the field in the past quarter of a century. An article in the National Reading Conference yearbook for 1956 illustrates this:

> "...junior college reading improvement programs provide for individualized work, utilizing some sort of textbook

> and manula or workbook (generally combined), involving some explanation and discussion of the problem of reading improvement, using frequent timed reading exercises and comprehension tests, and occasionally utilizing a tachistoscope and reading accelerators. To some extent reading films are used and attention is given to vocabulary development." (Andrews)

and there are other, even older articles, which demonstrate the same point. The current issues discussed herein were being discussed in the decade after the Second World War, with apparently little resolution (e.g., should credit be given, where should the program be housed organizationally, the importance of effective instructors, the need for individualized instruction, involvement of all institutional personnel, etc. See Worth, passim.)

The author discusses the Institutional Goals, Students, Programs and Services, Personnel and Organization, Instruction, Facilities and Finances, and Community Relations of the Community College as they relate to the Reading Center.

Let us begin with the Philosophy of the Community College as it is expressed in Institutional Goals:

Institutional Goals

"What Manner of Child is this Junior College" (Brick, Chap.3)

Reputable standard sources (Brick, pp. 1-27, 71-87; Fields,63-95, and passim.; Gleazer, 1968, passim., Blocker, et al., passim., Medsker, passim., and others) define the Community College as possessing several characteristics. It is an institution that is democratic - low cost, geographically and socially accessible, and often striving to open the doors of learning to the total population within the district being served. It is comprehensive - in purposes, programs, and students. It is a community-centered institution, dedicated to lifelong education. Finally, it is adaptable and not overly dedicated to hidebound tradition.

The Community College, moreover, performs certain functions (ibid.). Its instructional program is usually divided into five parts. It provides a transfer function for those students wishing to spend a year or two close to home studying courses which parallel those at other colleges and universities, and who then transfer to complete their studies elsewhere. It provides for career education for those students wishing to proceed directly after graduation into an occupational area with a skill. It supports a program of continuing education to help upgrade, refresh, or train adults who wish to learn a skill, a new occupation, or who attend for just plain interest. The Community College provides general and/or developmental education, and also student services to assist students in instructionally-related ways to enable them to succeed in their studies.

These characteristics and functions are common to most public community colleges and many private ones, and are present as institutional goals and objectives to specified degrees depending on several factors: source of control (public, independent non-profit, sectarian), commitment of the sponsoring community, needs of the local area and student body, encouragement and leadership by institutional personnel, available facilities, presence of fiscal support, and others.

All of the characteristics and functions listed in this section impinge one way or another on the Community College Reading Center as we shall see throughout this article starting with the Students:

Students

> "I was a high-risk student. According to all of the evaluative predictors, I should never have gotten a college education. My aunt once told me that I would never finish high school; the high school counselor said I probably would not get to college; the college advisor said that I was not master's degree material; and my friends told me the Ph.D. was out of the question. Fortunately, I did not know it." (Moore, Preface)
> --William Moore, Community College President

To the extent that the Community College is successful in achieving its Philosophy or Institutional Goals it has a diverse student body. Because of its desire to serve the community in which it is housed, its dedication to lifelong learning, its comprehensive program, and its availability in terms of geographical proximity, social accessibility, and financial reachability, it attracts a student body which is young and old, rich and poor, educated and undereducated. Students may range in age from 7 to 97, in wealth from well-to-do to poverty-stricken, and from those who already have an earned doctorate to those who have barely attended elementary school. Its open door, it it has an "open admissions" or "full opportunity" program, admits all kinds of students; indeed, the goal of many community colleges is to have their student profiles match the profiles of the populations in the communities they serve.

And they succeed. Student groups in Community Colleges include academically able recent high school graduates, high school graduates of lower ability, non-graduates, dropouts from other colleges, adults, the elderly, ethnic and racial groups, those who cannot speak English, Adult Basic Education students, those studying for a high school equivalency examination, professionals, semi-

professionals, and non-professionals from all walks of life, increasingly larger groups of women, and others. In short, the Community College contains students who were admitted to an ivy-league or seven sister school and did not attend to those who could gain admittance to no other institution of higher learning—and they are often found in the same classroom!

Increasingly, as we leave a day when only the academically superior and financially able attended college to a time when college for virtually all is becoming necessary in the eyes of some, the academically deficient student is finding his way into America's community colleges in larger numbers. As Roueche, Medsker, Monroe, and Martin have each written:

> "With pressures fromsociety to lengthen the educational experience of all students, the low-achieving student has become conspicuous in community colleges." (Roueche, 1968,15)
>
> "Students with subject deficiencies were found to be admitted to more than 90 per cent of the public junior colleges, sometimes on a provisional basis but usually as regular students." (Medsker, 65)
>
> "...students who do not possess even the minimum levels of skills in reading, writing, and language. Usually other deficiencies are found in general knowledge, work-study habits, and motivation." (Monroe, 35)
>
> "In community colleges many students have a history of failure (particularly in academic subjects), view reading as a frustrating experience devoid of pleasure, and have had years of remedial reading instruction but little satisfaction in using a textbook as a source of knowledge." (Martin, 368)

These students also may come with a "lack of educational tradition, low motivation, low self-esteem, poor reading and language skills, antagonism toward school and authority figures, unstable home life" and other similar characteristics (Cohen, et al., 1971, 81).

In one school visited by the writer, one such student, let us call him Sam, tried to break this cycle by applying for a job as a

beer truck driver, and he would have succeeded except that he could not secure a driver's license because he could not read the instructions to fill out the form. The employer sent him to the college for diagnosis and remediation.

Thus "...community colleges...are confronted with the problem of raising the level of and broadening the reading interests of many students with similarly restricted reading interests." (Koos,338) And the task is not an easy one, for the students' range in reading abilities is often ten or more grade levels (from the second grade up in one college the present writer visited), and many start college without ever having read a single book through!

On the other hand, Strang indicates that:

> "...even able college freshmen may profit by a course in reading. Perry /at Harvard/ found that, although the freshmen he tested were above the 85th percentile on an objective standardized test, only 1 in 100 was able to grasp the central thought of a chapter in a college textbook." (Strang, et al., 1967, 67)

This was borne out by my personal contacts with reading center personnel. Having noted this, however, let us hasten to add that for purposes of this article we are not focusing on the needs of this stronger student, but, rather, on two other types--those of limited intellectual ability, and those able students who have not developed needed academic skills.

In summary, then, community college students are diverse, and they often have educational deficiencies, particularly reading disabilities. There are few statistics kept on the extent of such students ; one study, by Ferrin, indicates that one out of every nine students in midwestern community colleges are involved in either a formal developmental education program,

special academic skill services, and/or remedial courses (Ferrin, 1,7,8). However, these kinds of specific estimates are relatively rare in the literature so far. In practice,also, statistics are sparsely kept; one college visited by the present author estimated that one out of every four applicants read below grade level and could benefit from the clinic's services. We do know that the number is increasing and should continue to increase as more and more students with diverse backgrounds are admitted, as enrollment in these programs lose their negative stigma, and as more colleges become commited to them. As Dr. Edmund J. Gleazer, President of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, suggests, we may only have found the tip of the iceberg:

> "No one knows how many youth and adults with similar problems /insufficient educational background/ never get this far, to their detriment as well as that of the nation." (Gleazer, 57)

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

> "If junior colleges accept this array of applicants, they have the problem of providing programs for them." (Schenz, 22)

As indicated earlier, the community college program is comprehensive and, as such, includes instruction in a variety of disciplines to meet the diversity of needs of its students. In order to help its students succeed in the transfer, occupational, and continuing education programs, the college must provide a number of services including developmental education, testing, counseling, veterans and foreign student information, financial aid, placement, student activities, occasional day care facilities, among others.

This comprehensiveness of program offering taken together with the diversity of students yields several conclusions: The reading program itself must be diverse, as suggested by Worth:

> "Such diversification must be taken into account when establishment of a reading program is considered. It may result in the formation of several different types of courses, such as short courses in speed reading for qualified adults, and full semester courses slanted toward the acquisition of basic reading skills for thecollege students." (Worth, 104)

Moreover, the reading program must not be viewed in a vacuum. As Raygor indicates:

> "Reading instruction cannot be separated from other basic skills. Language patterns are usually established as a part of a general developmental pattern, in which spelling, writing, reading, vocabulary development, and study skill development are all simultaneously acquired. Students who have difficulty in one of these language areas usually have difficulty in others." (Raygor, 168-169. See also NCTE, 1965)

An even more basic suggestion, to be followed up later in this article, is that because of the complex interweaving of student deficiencies, the reading and English programs cannot really be separated from other developmental and remedial offerings of the college (e.g., Mathematics, Study Skills, Psychology, etc.) or from the totality of instructional and student services offered by the institution.

What is disturbing, however, is the fact that, although we have had reading problems in colleges for as long as we have had colleges, the introduction of large scale efforts at remediation is only recent. Each of the community colleges contacted by the author has the program for less than five years, one of them, with 7,000 students, for only one! In 1964, only a decade ago, Schenz found that only 20 per cent of the community colleges he studied had designed special programs and curricula for low achieving students (Schenz). Too few have had reading clinics (Gallagher, 122) or programs (MSA, passim.), or when they have, they have been rudimentary programs with little or no sophistication or evaluation of results, and with little distinction among services required for specific students, so that often students with different ills received the same doses of the same medicines, with dire results.

More recently, however, there has been great interest in introducing developmental programs and we have had a vast flurry of activity. Very recently as prestigious a group as the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has recognized the need, and has suggested a "foundation year" for the open door college (Carnegie, 22-23), and this should spur the formation of new programs. A cursory look at the literature (Ferrin, MSA, for example) and

personal contacts (Cooperative College Center of Westchester, Dutchess Community College, Genesee Community College, Harford Community College, and Westchester Community College) reveal a number of programs. These tend to vary according to the size ofthe college, the newness of theprogram, the degree of commitment of the College, the finances available, and so forth. As we shall see below, thy vary in time, organization, resources, and effect..

These programs have grown in sophistication to the point where they are no longer single-dimensiond remedial courses. Monroe points out that:

> "A developmental program goes beyond offering a few remedial courses. It becomes a total entity within the college curriculum and has an existence as unique and distinct as the college-transfer programs or the occupational programs." (Monroe, 111)

and Ferrin adds that:

> "In the past five years alternatives to the traditional remedial course pattern have been sought..../with the result being/...a wide range of curricular or support services or both to a specified group of disadvantaged students." (Ferrin,4)

Ferrin has estimated that of the responding colleges in his study, 80 per cent have remedial courses, 50 per cent have special academic skills services, and 33 per cent have formal developmental programs (Ferrin, 1,8,9), but, to re-emphasize the newness, most of the latter two are "less than three years old."

Furthermore, as will be indicated later, it is increasingly realized that not every program can apply to all students. Each must identify those students who can benefit, and those that cannot must be served by another combination of resources (Losak, 385-386). This is highly important, for each program must have clear objectives..

Bushnell has written that:

> "...the objectives for developmental programs are often vague and sometimes contradictory....Goal clarification would enhance the probability that students assigned to developmental programs would perceive them as potentially beneficial experiences..."
> (Bushnell, 110)

As a summary exercise to this brief sub-section, the present writer has attempted to cull from both the literature ad personal contacts, the objectives of community college reading and developmental programs. Not all colleges have all of these items, but it is especially important that each college with a program determine which ones it wishes to pursue and support:

Reading to discover organization
Skimming and Scanning skills
Increasing rate
Increasing comprehension
Reading for main idea
Reading for supporting details
Reading for significant facts
Reading for author's style, tone, and intent
Reading in specific subject matter areas
Helping instructors in other areas improve the reading of the literature of those areas
Critical analysis
Listening skills
Study habits and skills (e.g., SQ3R)
Making efficient use of time available
Attitude development
College adaptation
Understanding self
Tutorial help in specific courses
Academic and nonacademic counseling
Diagnostic procedures in reading and otherareas
Word attack and analysis
Vocabulary development
Keeping records of progress
Cultivation of the desire to read
Etc.

(Pollack, 78; Martin,1971; Ferrin,11-12, 39, 8-10; Worth, 105-106; Eller,74; Pauk, 1973; and personal contacts)

If thereading program is to do all or even many of these things, it must be well-organized and it must be prepared to ascertain which of these it is to do for which students. Or, put another way, it must be able to diagnose accurately the needs of the individual

student so that the Center can design a learning program for him or her.

Despite what is known about the multiple causality of reading problems (e.g., see Bryant, 2-4 on confusion from missed or erroneous learning, emotional interference, neurological dysfunctioning; Schell and Burns/29-111 on multiple causality by social, emotional, psychological, educational, instructional, physical, and environmental factors; also Strang, 1968, passim., and McAllister, 24-26 on intelligence vs. visual, auditory, or neurological development), many colleges treat all reading problems alike instead of being concerned with basic and secondary causes of the disability so as to provide "a structure which suggests a designed and purposeful approach to remediation." (Bryant, 5) Too often they are content to offer one course and then place students within it willy-nilly, expecting them in one semester or one year of meeting three times a week for fifty minutes to overcome problems which it has taken a lifetime to acquire and reinforce. Just as frequently, educators at these institutions mouth the platitude that there are individual differences and that these should be treated in the colleges' educational programs.

The tests which seem to be most frequently used in collegiate situations (including those contacted by the author) are the Nelson-Denny, the Iowa, the California, the Cooperative English Tests, the Schrammel-Gray, and the Gates MacGinitie (Evans; Strang, et al., 1967,193; and personal contacts).

However, we find in the collegiate realm many of the same cautions about testing that we have in the K-12 program and one or two others:

> "...few tests are directly applicable since most published standardized tests were developed for the high school and four-year college." (Roueche and Boggs,1)

Various tests, including the Gates Basic Reading Tests have some items whichcan be correctly responded to by persons who have not read the reading passage; in some instances such persons answered up to 67 per cent as many items correctly as did examinees who were provided with the passages (Pyrczak, 62-71). In others, including the Metropolitan, Murphy-Durrell, Clymer Barrett, Gates-MacGinitie, and Harrison-Stroud, there is lack of consensus as to which skills should be assessed as well as thetechniques employed to assess them; tests employed measure a limited number of readinss skills; attention span, cognitive learning style, and experiential background are not even measured (Rude, 572-580). General reading ability may have little meaning since skills for reading after the 9th grade are specific (Shores, 324-331). And, reading tests are useful "only to the extent that a reading index or test score is a valid measure of the complexity of reading skills which a college student needs for a successful academic adjustment--a highly dubious assumption." (Robinson, 86)

As in the elementary and secondary sectors, there is not total reliance on diagnostic tests, ad High School Rank, High School GPA, local placement tests, lack of qualifications for a particular program, and student initiative are taken into account (Ferrin, 9,31; Pollock, 78; and personal contacts). However, few colleges seem to have studied the validity of these multiple predictors.

Perhaps colleges need to take a closer look at their diagnostic procedures and utilize more student self diagnosis and/or instrospective reports which have been accomplished successfully recently (Artley; Strang, 1968, 6). Beyond that, each institution should attempt to clearly ascertain what its students need for academic success, and then institute diagnostic procedures and corrective programs instead of the testing programs and other measures currently employed.

Personnel and Organization

> "It is the responsibility of the reading center to consider the total person and not just the reading performance. It is theresponsibility of the reading staff to be aware of the linkages between reading difficulties and personality problems." (Ephron,274)

A perennial question has been:

> "What is the attitude of the faculty toward the addition of a reading program to the curriculum; is it politely passive, or cooperative (sic) supportive?" (Worth,105)

In truth the answer to this, based on the research accomplished by the present writer, is quite mixed. It almost seemed to depend on whose book or article was read, or to whom the writer spoke. More than a decade ago Dr. Leland Medsker found that:

> "The opinion of the junior college personnel on the role of the junior college in helping students to remove deficiencies is therefore quite clear. It is well that it is, for if such work were considered unimportant or undignified, the program would be virtually negated by the attitude of the staff." (Medsker,68)

However, in this writer's research there was little unanimity to support that seemingly untempered optimistic finding. Fiehler's observation that "in some faculties student drop-outs are regarded as a matter for concern, whereas in other situations they are regarded as evidence that the school is performing a desirable social function in selecting the more able students for academic preferment"(Fiehler,103), and Kolzow's that often faculty felt that "students should know how to read before coming to my course" were found to be true in personal visits. These interviews found faculty attitudes to be quite mixed. For instance one English department felt that it would "lose faculty lines" if reading were taught elsewhere. Some were glad that someone else was doing it and would give the student a D out of sympathy (and

possibly guilt?). In addition, four basic texts in college teaching housed in the Teachers College Library were examined by the writer. Two (Lee; Umstattd) seemed not even to mention reading problems, developmental-remedial courses, or the need of the college faculty member to take these into consideration. One (Estrin and Goode) had a chapter by George W. Joly labeled "Problem Students" which referred to such students as "Unskilled Laborers":"To use an industrial term, most of these freshman failures that I interview might be described as unskilled laborers who have applied, and mistakenly have been accepted for work in a precision shop (p.187)." Only one (Brown and Thornton) identifies the kinds of reading which should be understood and practiced by college students (p.157) and elsewhere devotes four full paragraphs to Remedial Instruction, concluding that:"The solution seemed self-evident--if the high schools had failed to teach these skills properly, the college would have to do it. But the experience has been disillusioning (pp. 97-98)." Lopate concluded that:

> "With the exception of a half dozen faculty members who were involved in tutoring or other activities, and two members of the administration who were sympathetic to and remained in close contact with the Program, there was virtually no communication between the College Readiness Program and the college at large."
> (Lopate, 21; see also Moore)

Similarly, optimistic findings, like that of Schenz: "The remedial function is accepted by the administrators of junior colleges as a legitimate function of these institutions." (Schenz,27), concerning administrators, failed to find unanimity. Witness, for example, the President of a college in Chicago which had one of the earliest community college compensatory programs:

> "What has happened to the American high schools since 1930 is now happening to the American college, especially the community college. When 50 per cent or more of a

> high school graduating class presents itself for admission to the colleges, then the colleges are in trouble. The old notions of what a college is and what constitutes a college faculty and curriculum fly out the academic window." (Monroe,106,111)

However, it did seem to the present writer that, on the whole, administrative support seemed more positive than faculty support. Needless to say, both are critical to successful programs, and those colleges with the most advanced programs appeared to be those with the greatest positive attitudinal support and the most positive program image. Before too much is made of this finding, however, the author hastens to add that it is based on limited research.

A quick word on commitment of the institution: one measure of it is the number of staff devoted to reading programs and developmental centers in general. One college contacted had one professional and a part-time student aide; another had one professional, but was expanding to four, and so on. Others have very full staffs, but sometimes face faculty criticism from those who think they are either overstaffed or underworked. Ferrin found that the faculty-student ratios varied in midwestern community colleges' programs from 1:8 to 1:31, and the counselor-student ratio from 1:26 to 1:189 (Ferrin, 12-13, 40-42). In two-thirds of the instances part-time personnel were employed, and very few paraprofessionals, perhaps reflecting the newness of the programs rather than the lack of commitment.

One thing did receive unanimous support: the preparation, quality, dedication, and the open, caring attitude of the staff was crucial to success (Fiehler, 103; Richardson and Elsner,19), although this writer must echo Earle who wrote: "This writer is not aware of any program designed specifically to train teachers of

reading in junior college." (Earle, 381) It seems that the establishment of interest in college and adult reading teacher-training programs would find a fertile field for graduates.

One attitude that should be fostered is that the problem of reading affects all at the community college. It is too easy for one faculty member to say that the problem belongs to only a few specialists in reading, for a student to ignore fome other student's problem, or for faculty members to overlook the role of student services. Actually, as indicated earlier, the physiology and psychology of the underprepared learner is such that the student often may have an organic impairment and/or a psychological disturbance. These students often suffer from "lack of confidence, shyness, and an inability to work with authority figures." (Bushnell, 109) They are often in need of psychological counseling, and a major cause of high attrition is the reluctance of students to accept realistic goals (Cohen, et al., 1917, 83). It seems to be recognized by all that:

> "The needs of students are served best by professional staff members who are perceived as counselors as well as teachers....possibly half of the students seeking help in college reading programs have emotional as well as instructional needs." (Raygor, 169)

Thus it is impossible to very finely separate out the purely academic from the student services area. Similarly students in regular classes with students with learning impairments find tat their work can suffer too if the entire class is held back because of an uncontrolled learning problem.

By the same token, faculty members in various disciplines can be taught to take an interest in a problem which very directly affects them, for content area instruction can be easily integrated with reading instruction when faculty members take an interest.

As Twining noted:

> "...it must be made apparent to the content area teacher that, while the reading program can deal with a large number of disabilities with a high degree of success, the teacher must supplement the program's success in the classroom." (Twining,348)

This can be accomplished in a variety of ways including devising class materials and tests based upon available standardized scores; paying attention to the readability of assigned texts andsupplementary materials; posing significant questions about thereading; building word lists of specialized vocabulary; showing students how to preview reading material in the content area; and others (Davis in Barbe, 306-309; Kolzow). A community college learning laboratory director, in giving hints on "How to Get Your Foot in the Classroom Door" found that when she reported the findings of the reading scores to general faculty members and offered her services, the faculty responded by requesting more individual help, a handbook of aids for theteacher, information on how to assess the difficulty of their course texts, and a videotape on effective studying. This latter technology can be utilized with the instructors themselves in preparing packaged, self-contained in-service training units (Tyler) to help make "every teacher a teacher of reading." One of the colleges visited actually plans to hold an "open house" to familiarize instructors with existing services and to try to secure failing mid-term grades in order to locate additional clients and to demonstrate the usefulness of the Center to the faculty, since at that college the program was perceived as "coming in the back door."

A related problem is an organizational one. Almost a quarter of a century ago we were asking the same question:

> "How shall the program be administered--will it function most efficiently under the aegis of the English, or Education, or Psychology Department? Perhaps it might be set up as a separate service?" (Worth,105)

and we still do not have the answer. Of the programs contacted, each college organizes it in a different way: one has all content courses under the wings of the respective departments--English and Mathematics; a second has it as a part ofthe Humanities Division and physically located in a classroom building; another established a separate division with its own faculty, counselors, and other instructional and student service personnel; still another depended heavily on its behavioral science faculty members for input; and yet another locates it physically and organizationally as part of the Library (or Instructional and Learning Resources Division). Others have them as part of the Counseling Center (Gallagher,123-127) in a separate physical facility, and still others as community-centered laboratory clinics (Fields, 183-184). The names vary as widely. There is no one right way or one right name. The important thing is to remember is that, although there may be competing units (some faculties feel threatened when rivaled by another unit teaching courses which might well be taught by the "regular" department; others are relieved, as if glad to not have to associate with "those students"), the important principle is service to the learner and cooperation among the various elements that can contribute. The problem is a college-wide one, andso must be the response. It, therefore, becomes less important who should administer the program, as long as it gets accomplished.

Instruction

> "There is a need for programs which encourage the student to develop at his own pace and in which his own progress rather than adherence to a set schedule becomes the criterion for success."
> (Carnegie Commission,22)

The writer is impressed with the degree of innovativeness and creativity of many working in the field. As David Bushnell reports: "Such efforts /developmental programs/ start with the assumption that all (or most) students have the ability to achieve under the right circumstances (Bushnell, 108)," and those developing curriculum materials in the field seem to prove this over and again. Program lengths vary depending on student needs from a summer to a semester to a year to longer when needed (one college contacted is considering adding a third year option to every curriculum it offers). There are individual units, whole courses, and entire years' activities, and student schedules vary from full to curtailed in order to accommodate the extra learning activities. One program contacted had four distinct levels, and students progressed from one to the other before proceeding to college work. Even when student instruction is individual there may be block scheduling and group activities, leading one advocate to proclaim: "Block scheduling helped solve the persistence problem. Being part of a small, cohesive group of students made it harder for an individual student to just leave..." (Chalghian,29). Instruction ranges from one-on-one to faculty teams. Credit is increasingly being given, albeit reluctantly in some quarters; this latter, age-old controversy ("There is room for differences of opinion whether or not college credit should be given for reading improvement

activity." Fiehler,103) seems to be settling down with 2/3 of the colleges with remedial courses, and 3/4 with developmental programs awarding at least partial credit for successful completion, although in 3/4 of the cases these credits do not have transfer value to other institutions (Ferrin, 9-10,34). And so they should earn credit, for motivation's sake, if for nothing else; at least one college contacted has coupled the introduction of developmental activities with a non-punitive grading system. As one student put it: "...the big thing is to find methods of remediation that don't penalize us any more than we have been already." (Maeroff, 24).

One could level four criticisms against instructional reading practices in the community colleges: First, too many seem to learn little from parallel work in the k-12 program. For example, trial remediation, sound remediation, shadow reading, kinesthetic methods, and other techniques, to name but a few, do not seem to be employed with sufficient frequency. Second, too many colleges (perhaps because of formal relationships with faculty bargaining representatives?) tend to schedule classes for remediation rather than individual diagnosis, prescription, and evaluation with active, individual involvement of the student in the learning process. As Raygor has written:

> "Students differ not only in the absolute level of development of their general language facility but also in the particular skills involved. A group treatment which assumes that each student in the room needs to work on the same skill at the same level overlooks this important simple truth.... If people are different, then they need different treatment." (Raygor,168)

Fortunately, "modern self-instructional methods make individual instruction possible on a large scale." (Raygor, 169), and many

colleges are beginning to employ such methods. Third, unfortunately, however, too many seem to be excessively looking for "hardware" rather than concentrating on what "software" goes into that hardware. One such course (Pollock, 78, 82) uses a combination of Craig Reader, EDL Controlled Reader, SRA Accelerator, Books, Tapes, and other devices, all to build speed, but individual programs are prescribed for specific learning problems. In other programs, however, the students find it amusing to play a game to "beat the machine." While initially motivating, the halo effect of the equipment does not seem to last ad Karlin has concluded that, while flashmeters, pacers, and films improved reading rate and comprehension, so did standard normal instructional methods and that "...perhaps the monies which might be spent for the purchase of reading machines /should/ be used for other purposes." (Karlin,338) Fourth, college reading programs seem to be seeking commercially prepared materials, rather than developing their own. To the extent that personnel are swamped with students to be taught and not enough time to be creative, this is understandable. Nor is this to say that all ready-made materials are no good. As a matter of fact, for some students, and for some units, such materials will suffice nicely. However, to rely on these alone is inappropriate. Available materials abound (Narang, 181-188; Roswell and Natchez, 243-244; Strang, et al., 1967, 525-528; Toothaker, 13-15,30). For example, one study on instructional materials used for word recognition and for comprehension in Adult Basic Education programs listed 57 different kinds of teacher-made materials, including flash cards, experience stories, picture cards and worksheets and charts, word lists and cards, duplicated lessons and exercises, tapes and records, transparencies, etc. (Sherk)

In addition to the self-made materials, among the most effective are the tailored materials, as Maeroff has indicated:

> "...a Yale graduate, teaching English part-time at the college /Bronx Community College/, discovers that the only way he can lift the low reading level of some of his collegians is to use sixth-grade materials he borrows from his mother, an elementary-school principal." (Maeroff,13)

Even more effective is the method devised at Cornell to match a slow student's reading level to his interest level: Pauk, using the Dale-Chall formula and the Koenke new scales, determined the grade levels of 120 adult-type articles, and then modified them to conform to reading levels 4-12. Students were so motivated by the interest level of these articles that they were reading three grade levels above their measured reading level. Personal contacts with those in the field turn up increasing instances of this being accomplished at the community college level (for instance at one college visited, virtually all materials were individually prepared or tailored, with the "generous assistance of the Xerox machine" as the director put it.

One caveat on textbook selection in the community college. As Cline has shown: 52 per cent of the community college students in his study had reading abilities below 17 textbooks' levels. Perhaps several levels of textbooks are necessary for a single course, since the average reading level of the students was 12.6, higher than most. Also, perhaps dependence on textbooks alone is inappropriate. (Cline)

All of this attention to materials is necessary, not only for the typical college-age student, but for the adult served in the junior college as well:

> "This contrast provides food for speculation as to the competence of the poorer readers to profit from programs of adult education without simplification of content, extensive adaptation of procedures, and/or prior efforts at improving reading skills." (Koos, 408)

Facilities and Finances

"All Mark Hopkins needed was a log with a student on one side and himself on the other..."
(Community College administrator referring to location)

The article by Martin cited in the Bibliography, seems to have left no stone unturned in including 22 items and information on spaces, carrels, seating arrangements, book room lighting, color scheme, carpeting, floor space, room dividers, etc. (Martin) In practice, facilities vary from sparse to plush, from casually planned to fully thought out, from central to dispersed, from easy-to-reach to inaccessible, and little has been written or thought about the effect of the location and condition of such facilities on the reading program. Where it is housed and how is often an indication of how strongly committed the college is to the program as well as being a function of organization.

More has been written on finances, but little specifically geared toward the two-year college. For example, Webster's cost-benefit study focused on six reading programs operating in the Grand Rapids, Michigan publich schools, and found that all programs resulted in less than one year reading achievement gain, although some were less expensive than others (Webster). While there seems to be great interest in the literature in performance contracting, behavioral objectives, and cost-benefit analysis ("How much learning is produced for each dollar spent?"), little of it relates directly to community colleges, and personnel in those institutions seem little interested in the subject.

Community Relations

> "Remediation has been a big flop,...It has been a crash program that has come crashing down around the ears of people who didn't design it well enough." (Maeroff, 24)

By Community Relations the writer means relationships between this program and the internal campus and the external public. Internally there seems to be a need to explain the objectives and the findings to all on campus so as to edify the uninitiated and dispel the detractors. The need for research will be discussed at greater length below as a conclusion to this section. Other institutions of higher learning in the area, no doubt, have similar problems, yet the present writer turned up no single instance of interinstitutional cooperation on developmental programs. It is conceivable that several smaller institutions could not support the services individually of a tester, or a psychologist, but collectively could employ such an individual, for instance. The taxpaying public, as well as State and local government has a stake in the outcomes of such programs, yet there seems to be little interest on their part in finding out how their dollars are being spent, and little interest on the part of the colleges in informing them.

Finally a word about research and evaluation. One college visited planned ___ to study the effect of the reading services upon the students; others referred to studies, but could not produce them. There seems to be too few studies dealing with permanency of gain, or for that matter with any part of the community college developmental center. Almost a quarter of a century

ago H.A.Robinson pointed to the lack of adequate validation data, particularly at thecollege level (Robinson), and little has been done to fill the void since. As indicated by two of the quotes which introduced this paper, there have been some studies, and they often show contradictory conclusions. These range from a 20 per cent to a 75 per cent "success" rate. (See for example Lopate,15; Losak; Koos, 409-410; Monroe, 35-36; and Ferrin, 1,14-15). However, the design of such studies leaves much to be desired. They are far from thorough, rarely analytical, and, frankly, not too useful.

The truth of the matter is, that:

> "with very few exceptions, little research has been implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of these remedial programs and instructors... intuition rather than research appears to be the basis for most remedial programs."
>
> (Roueche,1968,41)

and:

> "...those that do have so-called developmental programs have frequently organized them in a haphazard fashion and have uniformly ignored the responsibility to evaluate their contributions honestly."(Blocker,208)

Community colleges, if they are to receive continued internal and external support for their development centers, must measure their effectiveness in accordance with specific performance-based objectives and general stated criteria such as does reading improvement lead to academic improvement, improved performance, increased persistence in college, and others (Koos,489; Roueche and Kirk; Worth, 106). They must, as one director of a program visited put it, "complete the loop--put feedback in the system."

Conclusion

"We need better understanding, not more figures,..."
(Cohen, et al., 1971, 84)

In conclusion, then, the present writer has taken a quick exploratory tour through the Institutional Goals, Students, Programs and Services, Personnel and Organization, Instruction, Facilities and Finances, and Community Relations of the Community College as they pertain to the reading center at these institutions.

Many of the issues were being discussed twenty and twenty-five years ago. However, perhaps those were times that allowed more leisurely discussion, if only because the press of numbers was not that great. Today with many more students coming (enrollment has increased seven-fold from 1950 to 1972, AACJC, 7), and with even more on the horizon, and with society's expectations changed so that many more people see college as "for them," the community colleges can look forward to even further inundation. They must settle some of the basic issues (as it seems is being done) so that they can move on and concentrate on nurturing effective reading (and other) programs.

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